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Environment and sustainable development: further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.30

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedures of the General Assembly

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of paragraphs 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 23 of draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.30, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide that the International Meeting to review the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and of the Barbados Declaration will be convened from 30 August to 3 September 2004 and will include a high-level segment to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and welcome the offer of the Government of Mauritius to host the International Meeting;

(b) Decide also to hold, if deemed necessary by the open-ended preparatory meeting and funded from voluntary resources, two days of informal consultations in Mauritius on 28 and 29 August 2004 to facilitate the effective preparation of the International Meeting;

(c) Endorse Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/55 of 24 July 2003, in which the Council decided, on the recommendation of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session, to convene an interregional preparatory meeting for small island developing States in Nassau, Bahamas, from 26

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to 30 January 2004, express its appreciation to the Government of the Bahamas for hosting the meeting and encourage participation in the meeting at the ministerial level;

(d) Also endorse the decision of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/55, on the recommendation of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session, to convene during its twelfth session a three-day preparatory meeting for the International Meeting, from 14 to 16 April 2004, for an in-depth assessment and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action and to finalize the preparations for the International Meeting, including its agenda;

(e) Decide that the preparatory meeting shall be open-ended and in accordance with the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and the supplementary arrangements established for the Commission on Sustainable Development by the Council in its decisions 1993/215 and 1995/201, applied to all Member States and other participants, as was the practice in the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, while maintaining the provisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development in relation to travel assistance, and in accordance with the provisions of Economic and Social Council decision 2003/283 of 24 July 2003;

(f) Take note of the appointment of a Secretary-General for the International Meeting;

(g) Request that the necessary resources, within existing resources, be provided to the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to ensure that the goals and purposes of the International Meeting receive the widest possible dissemination within Member States, major groups, including non-governmental organizations, and national, regional and international media, including through the Small Island Developing States Information Network, with a view to encouraging contribution to and support for the International Meeting and its preparatory process;

(h) Express its appreciation for the contributions made to the voluntary trust fund established for the purpose of assisting small island developing States to participate fully and effectively in the International Meeting and its preparatory process, as approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/55 and decision 2003/283, and urge all Member States and organizations to contribute generously to the fund;

(i) Encourage the full and effective participation of developing countries in the International Meeting and invite donor countries and agencies to provide additional extrabudgetary resources, in particular through voluntary contributions to the trust fund, to facilitate their participation;

(j) Welcome the generous contributions by donors to support the staffing of the Small Island Developing States Unit and call upon the Secretary-General to explore practical options for strengthening the Unit, including through the redeployment of resources, on a permanent basis in the biennium 2004-2005, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 56/198 and 57/262, with a view to facilitating the full and effective implementation of the Barbados Declaration and the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcomes of the International Meeting.

II. Relationship of the proposed requests to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005

2. The activities to be carried out relate to subprogramme 4, Sustainable development, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and section 9, Economic and social affairs, section 10, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, and section 28, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

III. Activities by which the proposed requests would be carried out

3. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would assume responsibility for carrying out activities in implementation of the draft resolution.

4. The conference-servicing requirements related to the preparatory process and for the International Meeting in 2004 have been included in the resources requested in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

5. With regard to paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, it is anticipated that if the preparatory meeting decides that two days of informal consultations should be held in Mauritius on 28 and 29 August 2004, additional costs relating to subsistence allowances of United Nations staff servicing the meeting would be borne by the host Government.

6. Under the terms of paragraph 15 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would welcome the appointment of a Secretary-General for the International Meeting. Since the Secretary-General for the International Meeting has been appointed from within the Secretariat, it is expected that requirements for travel to be undertaken by him will be met within the provisions under section 10, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, except for travel to the International Meeting and its planning process, which will be borne by the host country.

7. In regard to paragraph 17 of the draft resolution, a provision of $211,300 has been made under section 28, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, for promotional public information activities before and after the International Meeting, such as brochures, press kits, posters and post-conference publications, the development of the conference web site, coverage of the interregional preparatory meeting, as well as other requirements.

8. With reference to paragraph 23 of the draft resolution, the attention of the Committee is drawn to paragraph IV.19 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/7). The Advisory Committee was

informed that a qualified expert from a small island developing State had been identified to fill the position of Chief of the Small Island Developing States Unit, that a P-2 post had been deployed to strengthen the Unit and that two extrabudgetary posts, funded from trust funds, would work on the Small Island Developing States Information Network. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will continue to explore all possible practical measures to strengthen the Unit.

IV. Additional requirements at full cost

9. To assist small island developing States to participate fully and effectively in the International Meeting and its preparatory process, as described in paragraphs 11 and 18 of the draft resolution, it is estimated that additional resources totalling $617,600 would be required for travel expenses. Moreover, with regard to paragraph 19, for the full and effective participation of other developing countries in the International Meeting, the related travel requirements are estimated to be $385,400. The requirements, totalling $1,003,000, would be met from voluntary contributions.

10. The estimated additional requirements would cover travel of representatives of small island developing States to the interregional meeting in the Bahamas and the preparatory meeting of the International Meeting that will be held under the auspices of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the International Meeting in Mauritius. It is understood that provisions for travel of representatives of small island developing States will include travel and subsistence allowance in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2003/283. Consistent with normal practice in such matters, only travel, but not subsistence expenses, will be provided for participation of representatives of other developing countries in the International Meeting in Mauritius.

V. Potential for absorption

11. The additional requirements will be met from resources contributed to the trust fund to assist small island developing States to participate fully and effectively in the International Meeting and its preparatory process. The balance of contributions to the trust fund currently stands at $80,000. It is anticipated that additional contributions will be forthcoming to allow such participation of representatives from small island developing States and other developing countries.

VI. Conclusion and recommendation

12. **Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.30, the additional requirements of $1,003,000 relating to participation of small island developing States and other developing countries in the International Meeting and its preparatory process would be funded by voluntary contributions. There would be no additional requirements over and above the resources requested in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.**